

Voluntary Service Office News Central



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USA Freedom Corps

President Bush's Administration is proposing to create and expand activities that will enhance homeland security, provide additional community-based service and volunteer opportunities, and assist people around the world. It is an integrated citizen service initiative. President Bush is calling on all Americans to serve their country for the equivalent of two years—or 4,000 hours — over a lifetime.

The **USA Freedom Corps** initially will have three major components:

- ♦ A newly created Citizen Corps to engage citizens security: The new Citizen Corps will consist of Citizen Corps Councils. It will engage Americans in specific homeland security efforts in communities throughout the country. These initiatives include a Medical Reserve Corps, a Volunteers in Police Service Program, doubling of Neighborhood Watch, a new Terrorist Information and Prevention System, and a tripling of Community Emergency Response Team members.
- ♦ An improved and enhanced AmeriCorps and Senior Corps: The Administration will provide additional community-based service opportunities and will leverage hundreds of thousands of additional volunteers

through 25,000 new AmeriCorps participants, 100,00 new Senior Corps participants, and removing barriers to service. The 25,000 new AmeriCorps participants will generate at least 75,000 additional new volunteers.

- ♦ A strengthened Peace Corps: The President's plan will double the number of Peace Corps volunteers over the next five years, returning to number of volunteers to near its historic high, which was 15,000 of June of 1966.

The President is requesting more than \$560 million in new funds in FY 2003 to support this new citizen service initiative.

The citizen service initiative will be managed by a new USA Freedom Corps Council and Assistant to the President within the White House. The Council and White House Office will make further policy recommendations to the President to enhance service, help agencies recruit and mobilize volunteers, study how better to chart civic progress, and find ways to recognize the participation of Americans in serving their communities, country, and nations around the world.

New Initiative...

Sue McCormick, Voluntary Service, West Palm Beach, FL, has developed a new volunteer assignment.

The PT Computer Lab at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center is a formidable team. A volunteer work force, 45 members strong, operate a computer program that provides formalized classroom training to veterans and volunteers. The volunteers are comprised of retired teachers, former corporate executives, engineers and a retired physician.

Volunteers rebuild donated computers and the computers are then loaned to veterans who do not have the means to purchase their own computers. The volunteers also do the repairs and keep them in good working condition.

Currently this outstanding volunteer team is revising their curriculum to include a new class for those who have taken the basic course. The new course will include internet training and will be taught by a retired high school principal.

This dynamic team has had over 700 veterans go through the training course. The majority of volunteers are veterans who are still providing outstanding service.

What a terrific idea!! Great job!

"Volunteer Team is revising curriculum to include Internet training..."



Websites for Volunteer Pictures

www.ditto.com — Looking for graphics that depict volunteering? Try ditto.com. A search engine for images, using "volunteer" as a search parameter.

Search engine Google.com also has an image search engine.

—The Volunteer Management Report

Offer made...

Ms. Karen Helms, Karmichael Press, has made a donation of the following books to the Lake City, FL VAMC:

The Proud Bastards, by Michael Helms, a compelling true story of his experiences in the Marines from boot camp at Parris Island through combat in Vietnam during the height of the war in 1968.

From the Wilderness, by native American Walt Larson, general adult fiction. A fascinating, fast-moving tale of action, romance and high seas adventure. A child of two worlds yet belonging to neither, half-breed Toby Jensen leaves the Alaskan wilderness to find his place in the white man's world.

The Altonberrys of Sandwich Bay, by Leo Carpenter, illustrated, (also in audio), all ages. Combine the wit and lyrical twists of Dr. Seuss, add a touch of nostalgia, a healthy portion of romance, blend well with humor, and you have Carpenter's magical story-in-verse. This is a heart-warming, poignant tale of a young-at-heart couple who find love, companionship and adventure in their golden years.

Ms. Helms is now extending her offer to other VAMC's that are interested in adding these books to their libraries. For more information, you may contact her by e-mail,

"khelms@karmichaelpress.com."

Personnel Changes:

Norma Byrd, is the new Voluntary Service Program Manager at VAMC, Fayetteville, NC.

James Lannigan, VAMC, Kansas City, MO, has been appointed as the VISN Liaison for VISN 15.



Condolences

The VAVS Central Office staff sends condolences to the family of Della Vasquez, Voluntary Service Specialist, Fresno, CA. Della passed away in January.

Calendar

VISN Liaison Teleconference Call, Wednesday, March 13, 2002, 12 noon.

National Salute Reports are due in VACO, VAVS, March 14, 2002.

St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2002

VAVS Teleconference Call, Tuesday, March 19, 2002, 12 noon.

First Day of Spring, March 20, 2002.

12 Ways to Retain Volunteers

Volunteer Services Coordinator, Susan Ferguson offers these 12 principles for holding on to your volunteers:

1. Provide lots of appropriate recognition.
2. Offer meaningful roles.
3. Provide letters of reference.
4. Give adequate support.
5. Make sure the volunteers know to whom they report.
6. Make sure they're supervised.
7. Offer feedback and allow them to offer you feedback.
8. Involve them in decision-making.
9. Provide adequate training and orientation.
10. Pay for training opportunities that bolster their skills development.
11. Be flexible, accommodating and respectful.
12. Allow for personal growth and change. Don't assume the volunteer will be happy doing the same job forever.

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Update...

Celebrated actor and 2002 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Chairman, Gerald McRaney kicked off the National Salute season by visiting veteran patients, staff and volunteers at the VA Medical Centers in Baltimore, MD and Richmond, VA, in late January. Mr. McRaney also spoke at the DAV National Commander's Recruitment Initiative Kick-off in Washington, DC. During his remarks, he told of his very moving visit to the VA Maryland Healthcare System and how energized he was after his visit. "Mac" pledged his support throughout the year, not only through visits to VA medical centers, but to assist in other VA activities.

Quote:

"Character is doing the right thing when no one is watching."
— J. C. Watts



Inspired by President's words.....

Morgantown, WV—When President Bush addressed the nation in the wake of September 11 terrorist attacks, he intended to unite, calm and inspire.

He also sought to prepare the country for the long, arduous road ahead as the United States declared war on terrorism.

He may never have thought he'd inspire a particular Morgantown man.

Joseph "Larry" McLaughlin, a Vietnam War veteran, was filled with many of the same emotions as other Americans as he watched the tragic scene of September 11 unfold. As the veteran listened to the commander in chief, an idea struck him.

"I remember when President Bush said, 'We're gonna smoke 'em out,'" McLaughlin said. I just got the idea from there."

His idea was simple: make a ball cap declaring the phrase that would come to characterize the war on terrorism in Afghanistan — "Smoke 'em Out."

At first, the veteran made a single hat for himself. Then others started noticing it as he wore it around town. In particular, American Legion Post 174 Cmdr. Ray Burkey took notice.

He suggested McLaughlin make more. That's just what he did — about 700 more. "There's still a lot of people asking about the hat," McLaughlin said. "Everyone's been real supportive, let me tell you."

McLaughlin first made four dozen hats, and "they went just like that," he said, snapping his fingers. He also added a small American flag pin to each hat.

From there, he approached a few friends and placed the hats in several restaurants and taverns. The orders grew until he moved almost 700 of the hats.

Slowly, the hats are making their way across the country. A member of the Westover Veterans of Foreign Wars took one to Texas, while more were sent to friends in Minnesota, he said. McLaughlin would like to see the trend continue but said he does not want to cash in on the veterans' show of patriotism. Instead, he is focused on the plight of fellow vets.

By accepting donations for the hats, McLaughlin was able to raise \$2,250 for what he is calling the Ray Burkey Veterans' Fund. Recently he donated the money to needy veterans at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Clarksburg.

Many veterans at the center cannot afford basic toiletries and other supplies. The money will go to lessen that burden, he said.

McLaughlin said the fund was not started for personal recognition but to pull veterans closer together.

"We are all brothers helping brothers," McLaughlin said. "We will soon be joined by those who are in action now. We await them with great pride."

"We all support our government, our country, our troops and our veterans," McLaughlin said. "I'd like to see veterans do this across the country to benefit the VA."

—Associated Press, 12/28/2001

JCAHO Update...

It will be one year in May that we received notification from the Joint Commission that they approved our revision of Human Resource Standards Applicability to Contracted and Volunteer Personnel. Since the receipt of this approval this office has been attempting to have "our" document on the JCAHO website. Recently, we have been notified that the Joint Commission is not going to change their document on the website for two reasons:

1. "Our" document is consistent with what is already stated.
2. Other than VA Voluntary Service, no one else has complained to them that their document is confusing.

The conclusion to this saga is that the document we provided everyone last May is an approved document from the Joint Commission and clearly states their opinion on volunteer competencies.